



RIO RANCHO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

September 13, 2013

Dear Sir/Madame,

I am writing today in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which, among other things, proposes changes to the E-Rate program. Before delving into my response to the proposed changes, I want to first thank the FCC for your continued support for the E-Rate program. The E-Rate program provides critical discounts to assist schools (like mine) to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

Rio Rancho Public Schools serves 17,404 students and it is only through the funding of the E-Rate program that we are able to maintain our Telecom and Internet services. Without the E-Rate funding source, our services would have to be scaled back dramatically and would be devastating to the mission of providing students the best opportunity to learn in the digital age. Every year there are new programs, which include learning as well as assessment, that we are able to take advantage of by utilizing the resources obtained from the E-Rate program.

The E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission. As the FCC moves forward with this NPRM, it is prudent to remain focused on the fact that E-Rate is a program that works and that any changes to the E-Rate program should be focused on expanding a successful program that has yet to reach its full potential. The current program, while needing some marginal updates to its structure, is most strained by increasing demand for E-Rate-supported services and persistently low funding. The single most effective step the FCC can take to bolster E-Rates current and future success is to provide \$5 billion in funding, an amount commensurate with current demand.

There are additional programmatic changes and restructuring that can provide additional efficiencies and savings. To rely solely on programmatic efficiencies, however, without providing additional new funding is a shortsighted solution, a policy that fails to address the program's most significant problem: inadequate funding.

I think this NPRM is an opportunity to tackle the important work of expanding a successful program. E-Rate is not a broken program that needs to be fixed; it is a successful program that schools and libraries continue to rely on, a program that must continue to provide funding critical for telecommunications and connectivity.

Rio Rancho Public Schools is a 60%-discount applicant so we only seek Priority 1 funding as we know we are not likely to be funded at the Priority 2 level. Due to inadequate

infrastructure in New Mexico, Rio Rancho never had access to appropriate bandwidth to support instruction. Our schools only had the capacity to share data within our own walls. Because of the opportunity to apply for E-rate, we have been able to improve external services. Without the discount we receive from the E-Rate program, our students would suffer as they would not be able to take advantage of extraordinary educational materials on the internet. In addition, teachers would not be able to share best practices from one school to another, or even outside of our district, state, or country as they implement Common Core State Standards.

Thank you for considering my response as you move forward with your decision on the E-Rate program. I applaud the FCC for its continued efforts to protect the already oversubscribed E-Rate program by ensuring the future of this successful program. I urge you to support significant increased funding for the E-Rate program, and to ensure that the program and its limited resources are protected and preserved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "V. Sue Cleveland".

V. Sue Cleveland, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools